/52 cont./

538 limited imagination, the Chleuhs /Shluh/ excel in the invention of minuscule poems and succeed in expressing, in two or three lines, a thought full of subtlety, with words whose meanings keep the freshness of life, in a language that writers' efforts have not yet dried out.

[517] /53/ It is during evenings of rest, when the Berbères /Berbers/ assemble in order to sing around glasses of tea, that one must try to understand the soul of the Sous. The "gembri" --
[534] crude mandolin from which the artist knows how to draw muffled and nostalgic sounds -- preludes the performance of the poets.
[533] Then their song rises, penetrated by the beating of a bronze timbal, mingled with improvisations and commonplaces, expressing the feelings of their hearts, sometimes simple, but more often mysterious and complicated like that of the primitives. For us the lines are wrapped in obscurities; nevertheless, they are filled with discreet allusions that all understand; they tell all at once about the considerateness of friendship, the strength of love, and the harshness of life. At the same time there are revealed
[181] the immoderate passion of the Chleuh /Shluh/ for money, the taste for intrigue, the respect for force; sometimes the martial power of the leaders is extolled, but less than the prestige of wealth, and very often in the tales the cleverness of a ruse gets the better of the heroes' courage.

181 These various aspects of the Berbérie /Barbary/ of the Moroccan South vie to compose for us the picture of a social life that has remained very archaic in its form and that offers us still today the spectacle that the most ancient civilizations of the Mediterranean were giving three millenniums ago. But the economy, the beliefs, and the language of the montagnards of the Sous are not alone in suggesting these comparisons; the study of their small states and their political transformations lets one perceive analogies even more precise and carry us back to the faraway time of the primitive civilizations of the ancient world.

[171] Masqueray tried to show, in Algeria, how the hamlets of the Aurès, the villages of Kabylie /Kabylia/, the small towns of the Mzab presented the picture of successive stages in the founding